# THE QUARTERS OF TARĪM
## AND THEIR TANṢŪRAHS

Like Šiḥr and Mukallā, the city of Tarīm is divided into a number of quarters. I have already given the names of the quarters in Šiḥr elsewhere[1], and those of Mukallā are marked on H. von Wissmann's map[2] where Hafd el-'Abī should be corrected to Ḥāfat al-'Abīd, i.e. the quarter of the Slaves. It may be recalled that when W. H. Ingrams arrived in Ḥaḍramawt these slaves were very powerful indeed just as they were amongst the Rwala chiefs[3] of N. Arabia. As in Mecca, the city quarters form an important part of the social structure of the community, and they have their own peculiar organisation upon which I have remarked previously[4]. There seems to be evidence from the inscriptions that cities in South Arabia, sometimes at least, were split up into quarters before Islam. In Tarīm there are no less than eleven quarters, though, as will be seen, only five of them are really independent, but even this is a large number for a city of approximately 15,000 inhabitants.

The five quarters of Tarīm are Ḥārat al-Sūḳ, Ḥārat al-Ḥilaif, Ḥārat al-Saḥīl, Ḥārat al-Nuwaidarah, and Ḥārat al-Ḥāwī. Of these the largest is Ḥārat al-Sūḳ. A saḥīl is a strip of land underneath a mountain, and including the mountain-side up to the base of the perpendicular Djol cliff[5], a word of frequent occurence. The town of Šibām which is not sub-divided into quarters, has a suburb

1 *Materials for South Arabian History* I, Bull. School of Oriental & African Studies (London, 1950), XIII, II, p. 296.

2 D. VAN DER MEULEN & H. v. WISSMANN, *Ḥaḍramaut, Some of its Mysteries Unveiled* (Leiden, 1932).

3 ALOIS MUSIL, *The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins* (New York, 1928), index *Slaves*.

4 *The Cemeteries of Tarīm*, Le Muséon, LXII, 1-2, p. 159.

5 For the peculiar cliff formation of Wādī sides, see *Ḥaḍramaut, Some of its Mysteries Unveiled*.

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known as al-Sahil, lying to the south of it. Al-Ḥāwī is a ḥawṭah or sacred enclave, the property of the Āl Ḥaddād saiyids. Amongst other ḥawṭahs in Tarīm are Ḥawṭat al-Šaiḫ (Ḥusain b. 'Abdullāh al-'Aidarūs), (this saint being the brother of al-'Adanī), lying to the west of the Djāmi' mosque, and Ḥawṭat Bā 'Alawī, the capital of the 'Alawī saiyids. Perhaps at one time these ḥawṭahs had an independent organisation of their own, distinct from that of the rest of Tarīm as al-Ḥāwī has to this day. Raḥaiyam Bā Faḍl indeed remarked that the city contained many old ḥawṭahs which are no longer treated as ḥawṭahs, but have become only quarters (ḥārah). The Masākin of al-Ḥāwī are independent of the other quarters of Tarīm, and follow the Manṣab who is, of course, an Āl Ḥaddād saiyid.

The other quarters of Tarīm are Ḥārat al-Ruḍaimah which follows the Sūḳ quarter (tābi'ah li-Ḥārat al-Sūḳ); that is to say that the Masākin of the quarter follow those of the Sūḳ quarter on ceremonial occasions, join with them in defence of their rights, and probably use the same tanṣūrahs. Then there is the suburb *extra muros* of Tarīm, Ḥārat 'Aidīd which follows Ḥārat al-Ḥilaif. There is Ḥārat al-Midjaff which follows the Sūḳ quarter; according to al-Fawā'id al-Saniyah[6] this quarter was once known as Ḥārat al-Ḳaṣṣārīn, though not in the author's day, presumably because laundering was done there, though it may have been the quarter where the periodical dying of clothes with indigo was performed. The remaining quarters are Āl al-Siddah, i.e. the Gate Section who follow the Sūḳ quarter, Āl al-Fidjīr who are ḍu'afā al-Sūḳ, and the Āl al-Ḥalif who are ḍu'afā following the Sahil quarter.

621 Those who follow the Sūḳ quarter follow the dallāls[7] and the
565 carpenters (nadjar, pl. of nadjdjār) of the Sūḳ; they go with them
463 on the pilgrimage to Hūd, and accompany them to put out fires, etc.

[6] Composed in 1908 H. (1789 A.D.), see my *Materials*, *op. cit.*, p. 296. This source also mentions another quarter known as حارة الارز which is said by some in that day to have been the old town from which building had spread out especially towards the north, but this old part of the city was not apparently on the main road from East to West.

[7] The dallāl is the intermediary between the tribesman and the shop-keeper. He is an important and interesting figure in the economic life of the country, but is of course of the Miskīn class.

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When there is a fire the people in the streets should cut « Wa-'n-nār wa-'n-nār », or, if there has been an accident when some one has fallen into a well, « Wa-'l-bīr ». At this all of the males of the quarter come running out at a trot, leaving their occupations. If it is a fire they take tanaks (tins) and fill them at the mosque cistern (ḥiābiyah). Only the Masākīn perform these duties of course, not the sayyids or mashā'ikh. Apart from the occasions cited in a previous article[8] another time when the quarter turns out is when a clay-bank (ḥjurf) of a water-channel or water-course has fallen on top of some person or persons. The latter are dug out by the quarter.

Each quarter has a tanṣūrah (pl. tanāṣīr), a kind of rallying-song or theme special to each quarter, and doubtless each with its special tune. These tanṣūrahs are used on all sorts of occasions, festal or otherwise, and probably, indeed, whenever a body of men from the quarter assemble together. The tanṣūrah may be compared in some respects with the tribal ṣarḥah and 'aswah[9] examples of which are given by Landberg. The following are examples of some of the themes used by the principal quarters of Tarīm.

1. Ahl al-Sūḳ

a. Metre : Wāfir type, ‖—|———∪|———∪

لَنَا ٱلزَّايِدْ وَفِينَا ٱلزَّايِدْ

Metre : Radjaz type, ‖—|—∪——|—∪—∪

وَشَيْخَنَا ٱلْمِحْفَنَار مَعْنَا

« We have the most, and amongst us lies the most.
And our Šaiḫ al-Miḥḍār is with us. »

As the metre of these two pieces differs I assume they are independent of each other though given me as a single tanṣūrah. The sense is that the Ahl al-Sūḳ is greater in numbers than any other quarter, it being the largest of all. Al-Miḥḍār is the celebrated Tarīmī saint. [792]

[8] *The Cemeteries of Tarīm*, *op. cit.*
[9] C. DE LANDBERG, *Arabica IV* (Leiden, 1897), pp. 18, 20, etc.

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b. Metre : Ramal type, ‖—|——∪—|——∪—

شَيْخَنَا ٱلْمِخْضَار يَطْفِى ٱلنَّار

« Our Šaiḫ al-Miḥḍār puts out the fire. »

This is a radjaz or zāmil known as radjaz ḫābbah, or « jingle used by a party of men at the trot ». It would be sung after a fire had been extinguished. It should be noted that extinguishing of the fire is attributed to the patron saint of the quarter, and one can with justification see in this the survival of some ancient pagan ceremony.

c. Metre : Basīṭ type,

‖—|—∪—|—∪——|—∪—|—∪——

وَٱلشَّيْخ وَٱللّٰه عُمَرْ يَا سَعْد مِنْ كَان شَيْخَهْ

« By the Šaiḫ, by God, 'Umar, O the good fortune of him whose šaiḫ he is. »

This radjaz (jingle) is also used in trotting.

d. Metre : Banī Mighrāh [10],

‖———∪|————∪|——∪|————∪

عُمَرْ مِخْضَار فِى كُلِّ حِجَّهْ نَهْتِبِى بِهْ

وَرَاسَ ٱلْخَصْم لِى قِدْ عَصَبْنَا بَيْن جِيَهْ

« 'Umar al-Miḥḍār, in every matter we shout for assistence to him.

And the head of the foe whom we have made up our mind (to attack) we shall bring [11]. »

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[10] I have named this metre Banī Mighrā because it seems to be invariably used in the poems which begin with this phrase. The Banī Mighrāh poem is the traditional hunting song of Ḥaḍramawt; it is discussed at length in my *Prose and Poetry from Ḥaḍramaut*.

[11] اعترى LANDBERG, *Glossaire Dat.*, « prononcer le cri de ralliement de la tribu, crialler ». My informant said it meant « to seek assistance from. » For عصب he gave the synonym اراد. One can say عصبنا السيله equivalent to بنينا السيله « We want to go to the Masīlah ». In the « oath of denial » *infra*, I think that the first two verbs must have the fundamental sense of « binding and loosing » بين جيه is equivalent to بنينا نجيبه.

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It seems that herein lie pagan ideas attached to the person of a Muslim saint who appears to be regarded in much the same way as a tribal god of the pre-Islamic era. On consideration, I do not think that the intent is to bring the head of the foe to 'Umar al-Miḥḍār; but he is evidently regarded as assisting the quarter in battle against, perhaps, another quarter, Muslims and Šawāfi' notwithstanding.

In the case of a quarrel between two quarters, when one quarter denies its culpability it uses the following formula :

لَا عَصَيْنَا وَلَا خَلَفْنَا وَلَا حَزَرْنَا وَلَا غَمَزْنَا

«We did not decide (to do anything), nor did we omit (to do anything), we did not look nor did we whisper [12]. »

This is known as the «oath of the denial» (yamîn al-inkâr).

2. Ahl al-Hilâf

a. Metre: Basît, ||—⏑——|—⏑—|—⏑——

اَلْيَوْم جُمْعَة وَغَدْوَة مِثْلُهَا
لَنَا تَقُوم اَلْتَبِلَة كُلُّهَا.
عِيدُهُمْ وَيَوْمُ حَشْرِ

«Today is Friday, tomorrow the same,
Until the Resurrection comes, all of it.»

The sense is, probably, that today is a holiday, or at least a fortunate day. After this and other verses, exclamations such as the above are commonly used. Another common exclamation is wā-Hilâhu. What these exclamations signify none can say, but all Ḥaḍramis concur that they are old and curious. I am tempted to suggest they might be corrupt vestiges of pagan religious ritual.

12. The latter two verbs of the «oath of denial» were thus paraphrased for me, but I feel that the classical senses of the Lexicons might be more appropriate here.

b. Metre :

Perhaps ‖——∪|—∪—∪—∪— فَاعِلَ مُسْتَفْعِلَ فَعُولَ

نَدْ قَنَصْنَا ٱلصَّيْدَ فِي رَبُوعَهْ[22]

شَيْخُنَا عَلِيَّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدْ

« We have hunted the game in its lairs (or mountain-sides). Our Šaiḫ is ʿAlī bin Muḥammid. »

This tanṣīrah has no small interest when it is recalled that the ritual hunt played an important part in the pre-Islamic religion of this part of Arabia, especially the hunting of the ibex[24]. The first half-verse is commonly sung by *all* the quarters of Tarim, and is even used by the people of the ḥawṭah of Tḥīt not far away. Šaiḫ ʿAlī bin Muḥammad is a saint of the Āl Ḫaṭīb family, known as Ṣāḥib al-Wʿīl, i.e. « He of the Ibex ». Once, on the occasion of a feast, either the lesser or the greater ʿĪd, he had no animal to slaughter by way of celebration, but on returning home from the mosque he found an ibex standing by his door. This was evidently a miracle performed on his behalf. Šaiḫ ʿAlī is the patron saint of al-Ḫāliṣ, and is buried in the cemetery of al-Furaiṭ[25]. The chief mosque of the quarter is Miṣǧid al-Wʿīl, and at one time when, owing to the dissension between three sections of the Yāfʿī rulers, Tarim was divided into three territories with three separate ǧāmiʿ mosques, the Miṣǧid al-Wʿīl was used for the Friday prayer; this took place about a century ago.

No doubt this tanṣīrah would be used by parties of hunters returning from the ibex-hunt as I have described in the preface to my book on Ḥaḍrami popular verse.

2. Ḥārat al-Šaiḫ

The people of this quarter mention their saint, an ʿAidarūs called Sayīd who is buried in Tārīmah, but I have no further particulars about their tanṣīrahs. They shout

[22] Variant شَمُوعَهْ.

[24] Cf. A. Bessaso, *The Ritual Hunt*, Le Muséon, LXI, 3-4, pp. 183-96.

[25] For this cemetery see *The Cemeteries of Tarim*, *op. cit.*

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Metre : Ramal, ||— — ∪ — | — — ∪ —

شَيْخَنَا عَلْوِى بِنْ أَحْمَدْ

4. Al-Nuwaidarah

The patron saint of al-Nuwaidarah is Šihāb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin 'Alī bin Abī Bakr al-Sakrān [16].

5. Ḥārat al-Ḥāwī

The tanṣūrah of this quarter mentions the saint of the ḥawṭah Laiḥanā al-Ḥaddād, i.e. the celebrated saint and author 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaddād who is also known beyond the confines of Ḥaḍramawt.

It would however seem that the term tanṣūrah is not confined to the rallying-cries of the quarters of the cities, for I can recall the word being used in the Dathīnah area when tanṣūrahs were performed over the grave of a man whose murder had been successfully avenged. It is a cry used also by the tribes [17] in Ḥaḍramawt.

Very similar to the Tamīmī tanṣūrah quoted by Landberg [18] is the tanṣūrah of the 'Abīd of Tarīm. The 'Abīd have an organisation in many respects similar to that of the Masākīn with a headman (muḳaddam). Their tanṣūrah runs :

بَنِى سِوَيْدَ ٱلْغَلَّابَهْ

كَمْ مِنْ قَبِيلِى ظَفِرْنَا بِهْ

« Banī Siwaid, the conquering,
How many a tribesman have we overcome. »

Landberg remarks that the verse he quotes is defective, if one must see a metre in it, but the first half-verse which he gives corresponds exactly in metre to the first half-verse of the tanṣūrah of the 'Abīd.

[16] « The Drunken » might, at first sight, seem an odd term to apply to a Muslim saint, but the term of course is Sufistic, and implies that he was drunk with the ecstacy of the knowledge of God. Some names are much more curious. I was told that the 'Aṭṭās saiyids derived their name from a miracle performed by their ancestor who is said to have been heard to sneeze while still in the womb!

[17] C. DE LANDBERG, *Ḥaḍramoût* (Leiden, 1901), p. 184.

[18] Loc. laud.

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Cries for assistance have also their own fixed forms. Should anything happen to a man he shouts for help with the phrase Yā Labbaik, yā labbaik [19], known to the classical tongue. Let it also be remarked that labbaik is the normal interjection used when asking a word or phrase to be repeated, equivalent to plaît-il. The reply to such a call by those coming to the assistance of a man in trouble of danger of any sort is Yā marḥīb, yā marḥīb. When in distress the 'Awāmir tribe shout out 'Āmir, yā wulīd 'Āmir, to which the reply is Labbaik, yā labbaik. The 'Abīd in similar circumstances cry 'Īk, 'Īk, and those coming to their help reply with zāmils.

It seems that when one gives the tribal cry (sarkhah) amongst the tribes of Raidat al-Daiyin, the words Yā Ḥimyarāh are shouted [20].

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[19] For an interesting use of labbaik see C. A. SNOUCK, *The Fākhir of al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Salama* (Leiden, 1915), p. 224.

[20] Al-Rābiṭat al-'Alawiyah, (Batavia, 1347 H.), I, p. 354.